THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) to (e) According to the assessment of Geological Survey of India, the coal reserves in Maharashtra upto a depth of 6000 metres are 6276.53 million tonnes as on 1-1-1993. These reserves are located in Chanda, Wardha, Kamptee, Umrer, Bander, Nand, Makardhokra and Bokhara coalefields. The Government have taken steps to exploit the coal reserves in the State matching with the projected demand by operating existing mines, implementing sanctioned projects and taking up new schemes. Coal production in the State is expected to be about 30 million tonnes by 1996-97 as against a production of 24.73 million tonnes in 1991-92.

Stagnation in production

2324. SHRI GAYA SINGH:
SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA:

Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the production from underground mines has been stagnating at around 80 million tonnes for the last few years;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(c) what steps are proposed to be taken to raise the production?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA) (a) to (c): Figures of coal production from underground mines in Coal India Limited (CIL) and Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) are given below:—

(million tonnes)

Year	Coal production from underground mines		
	CIL	SCCL	TOTAL
1989-90	58.70	12.03	70.73
1990-91	55.84	11.12	66.96
1991-92	56.63	12.30	68.93

Most of the underground mines are old and the coal production from these mines has been stagnating due to geo-mining problems like steep and multiple seams, occurance of fires, water logged old workings in adjoining areas, built-up surface structures which need protection by sand stowing etc.

Steps taken to augment coal production, inter-alia, include opening of new mines, modernisation of existing mines, application of new technologies to achieve maximum results and ensuring timely availability of inputs and infrastructural facilities.

Price rise due to new wholesale distribution system

2325. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL:

Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have recently launched a new wholesale coal distribution system in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof particularly indicating the extent to which the new system would benefit consumers in Rajasthan State as well as in Orissa as compared to other States;

(c) whether it has given led to increase in prices of coal as a whole if not, what are the reasons for continued steep rise in prices in the country; and

(d) what steps Government have taken so far to check further rise in prices of coal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) and (b) With a view to improve the availability of coal to the consumers in different parts of the country and for speedy liquidation of slow moving coal stock, Coal India Ltd. have prepared a scheme for developing wholesale trade in coal. Under this scheme, the subsidiary companies of Coal India Ltd will appoint wholesale deales on the basis of applications invited through open advertisements. It is stipulated that each dealer shall lift at least 3000 tonnes of coal per month. Coal sold will be under Liberalised Sale Scheme. Dealers will have the freedom to sell coal and fix prices for such sale.

Since, these dealers will be located near the consumption centres coal will be readily available to small consumers from a nearby source.

(c) and (d) The scheme is yet to be operationalised. However the coal to be made available for whole sale trade shall be over and above the supplies being made to the actual users. The actual users shall continue to get their coal supplies directly from the Coal companies at the notified prices. Hence no increase in prices is expected as a result of this scheme.

The recent revision of price of coal was necessitated in view of the fact that prices of various inputs in cost of production of coal had gone up. Coal companies have taken following steps to control their production cost and improve efficiency.

(i) Effective control of cost of production so as to have an adequate margin for sustained growth.

(ii) Improved manpower planning including redeployment of surplus labour and restricting the intake of new hands against vacancies caused by natural wastage.

(iii) Reduction in manpower through voluntary retirement.

(iv) Concept of 'all men all jobs' is being tried on experimental basis.

(v) Improvement in availability and utilisation of Heavy Earth Moving Machinery by providing adequate workshop support, improved management of spares and timely rehabilitation of equipment.

(vi) Procurement of Heavy Earth Moving Machinery and other equipments is scrutinised closely so that additions to plan and machinery are to minimised.

(vii) Special emphasis on underground mines to improve the productivity and profitability.

(viii) Stens taken to maintain better coordination with State Governments and also with appropriate authorities for acquisition of requisite land so that the mining activities can be taken up as per schedule.

(ix) Capital expenditure reduction without impairing short term/long term produciton potential so that impact of interest and depreciation in the future cost of production is minimised.